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Message Text

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73
ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 DRC-01 /056 W
---------- 122468
R 191740Z APR 74
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3468

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OTRA VE
SUBJECT: FEDERAL EXECUTIVE INSTITUTE (FEI) VISIT TO VENEZUELA

REF: STATE 77775 & 72726; CARACAS 3141 & 2970

SUMMARY: FEI GROUP'S VISIT TO CARACAS APRIL 17-20 IS PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY, WITH MINIMUM OF ADVERSE PUBLICITY. FOLLOWING HELPFUL STATEMENTS TO PRESS BY FONMINISTRY, INTEREST IN THE VISIT OF THE "SUPERSPIES" SEEMS TO HAVE WANED. GROUP'S SUBSTANTIVE PROGRAM HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL. END SUMMARY

1. MAS DAILY NEWSPAPER PUNTO APRIL 15-18 CARRIED PROMINENT REPORTS OF ARRIVAL OF FEI'S GROUP OF "SUPERSPIES," BUT GROUP'S VISIT WAS LARGELY IGNORED BY CARACAS PRESS, AND VISIT ITSELF FAILED TO AROUSE REAL GENERAL INTEREST.
2. AFTERNOON OF APRIL 16 MINISTRY OF DEFENSE ADVISED EMBASSY THAT ITS BRIEFING OF FEI GROUP, SCHEDULED FOR AFTERNOON OF APRIL 18, WAS BEING CANCELLED ON ORDER OF THE DEFENSE MINISTER. NO EXPLANATION WAS OFFERED.

3. FEI GROUP ARRIVED AFTERNOON OF APRIL 17 WITHOUT INCIDENT, MET BY POL COUNSELOR AND INFORMATION OFFICER. ONLY NEWSMAN AT AIRPORT WAS REPORTER FROM AFTERNOON DAILY EL MUNDO. GROUP LEADER NUECHTERLEIN, ASSISTED BY INFORMATION OFFICER, SPOKE WITH REPORTER. STORY APPEARED IN EL MUNDO OF APRIL 18 WITH PHOTOGRAPHS
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OF DR. NUECHTERLEIN AND OF GROUP ON INSIDE PAGE WITH FACTUAL REPORT

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OF GROUP'S PURPOSE AND IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE GROUP.
SAME ISSUE OF EL MUNDO ALSO FRONTPAGED ITEM HEADED "US OFFICIALS
ARE HERE ONLY OUT OF CURIOSITY, ACCORDING TO FOREIGN MINISTER."
ITEM QUOTED ACTING FONMINISTER JOHN RAFAEL AS HAVING SAID, QUOTE
I STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT THE VISIT OF THESE GENTLEMEN IS CONCERNED
WITH A NON-OFFICIAL MATTER OF A GROUP OF AMERICAN OBSERVERS
WHO ARE COMING TO THIS COUNTRY, I SUPPOSE, ATTRACTED BY THE
CURIOSITY WHICH A NEW GOVERNMENT AROUSES AND THE INCREASING
IMPORTANCE OF VENEZUELA IN THE HEMISPHERE AND THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY. THEY ARE NOT FROM THE CIA NOR ANYTHING OF THE SORT,
MUCH LESS SUPER SPIES.... I DENY THAT THEY ARE COMING TO VENEZUELA
TO PUT PRESSURE ON OUR GOVERNMENT, IN WHICH CASE
IT CERTAINLY WOULD BE REJECTED AT ONCE. UNQUOTE
EL MUNDO ARTICLE ALSO REPORTED RAFAEL INDICATED THE GROUP
WOULD NOT MEET OFFICIALLY WITH ANY MINISTER AND THAT THEY WOULD
ONLY TALK WITH GOV OFFICIALS VIA THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

4. THIS REPORT FOLLOWED BRIEF ITEM IN EL NACIONAL'S
"MIRAFLORES A LA VISTA" COLUMN APRIL 17 QUOTING RAFAEL AS SAYING
THE VISIT QUOTE IS STRICTLY PRIVATE. THE GROUP'S PURPOSE IS TO OBSERVE

CHANGES IN THIS COUNTRY, NOT ONLY OF THE GOVERNMENT BUT SOCIO-
ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT VENEZUELA HAS
CREATED GREAT EXPECTANCY WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT TEAM, AND PROOF
OF THIS WAS THE HIGH-RANKING DELEGATIONS TO PRESIDENT PEREZ'S
INAUGURATION. ANY OTHER CONSIDERATION AS TO OBJECT OF THE VISIT OF
THE U.S. GROUP IS MERE SPECULATION BECAUSE IT IS EXPLICABLE THAT
UNDER THE NEW STYLE WHICH THE U.S. WISHES TO GIVE TO ITS RELATIONS
WITH LATIN AMERICA THEY WANT TO OBSERVE THE PROCESS OF CHANGE IN
TH S COUNTRY WITHOUT THIS SIGNIFYING ANY DEROGATION AGAINST THE
SOVEREIGNTY OF THIS COUNTRY. UNQUOTE

5, AFTERNOON DAILY 2001 APRIL 18 BACKPAGED SHORT REPORT THAT
FEI GROUP WOULD BE RECEIVED BY ACTING MINISTER RAFAEL AND OTHER
FONMINISTRY OFFICIALS THE AFTERNOON OF THAT SAME DAY.

6. FEI GROUP ATTENDED REGULAR EMBASSY STAFF MEETING MORNING
APRIL 18 WHICH WAS FOLLOWED BY BRIEFING OF GROUP BY AMBASSADOR
AND COUNTRY TEAM. DURING BRIEFING DR. NUECHTERLEIN
ASKED WHY EMBASSY HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO DAMPEN EARLIER UNFAVORABLE
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PRESS PUBLICITY AND WHY FONMINISTRY HAD NOT ISSUED CLARIFYING
STATEMENT. HE WAS REMINDED OF EMBASSY'S APRIL 4 PRESS
RELEASE (CARACAS 2970) AND ADVISED THAT FONMINISTRY EVIDENTLY
FELT FORMAL GOV STATEMENT WOULD ONLY GENERATE FURTHER UNWELCOME
PUBLICITY. IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT EMBASSY STATEMENT HAD BEEN
CARRIED BY MOST CARACAS NEWSPAPERS, HAD PROBABLY AVERTED
FURTHER UNFAVORABLE PUBLICITY, BUT A FOLLOW-ON STATEMENT WAS NOT
AS EFFECTIVE AS THE INITIAL BAD PUBLICITY STEMMING FROM ORIGINAL

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AP STORY EMANATING FROM THE VENEZUELAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AND HEADLINED BY EL NACIONAL AND EL UNIVERSAL APRIL 4 (CARACAS 2970). DR. NUECHTERLEIN'S OFFER TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE WAS POLITELY DECLINED.

7. GROUP WALKED THROUGH CITY CENTER PRIOR TO BRIEFING BY FONMINISTRY OFFICIALS AT FONMINISTRY AT 4 P.M. APRIL 18. BRIEFING, CHAIRED BY ACTING DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL POLICY DIRECTORATE JOSE LUIS MARTINEZ, LASTED OVER TWO HOURS AND WAS INFORMATIVE AND ENTIRELY CORDIAL. AMONG EIGHT GOV OFFICIALS PRESENT WERE TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM MINISTRY OF MINES AND ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF ICE. EXCELLENT TRANSLATION WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY EMBASSY HIRED VENEZUELAN INTERPRETER. DR. NUECHTERLEIN AND GROUP EXPRESSED GREAT SATISFACTION WITH BRIEFING. POL COUNSELOR EXPRESSED GRATITUDE TO DR. MARTINEZ FOR MINISTRY'S EXCELLENT PRESENTATION.

8. AMBASSADOR GAVE INFORMAL COCKTAIL PARTY AT RESIDENCE FOR GROUP FOLLOWING THE BRIEFING. PARTY WAS ATTENDED BY A NUMBER OF VENEZUELAN COUNTERPARTS OF GROUP MEMBERS WHOM THEY WOULD HAVE MET IF VISIT HAD NOT BEEN CURTAILED, PLUS ONE MEMBER OF FONMINISTRY BRIEFING TEAM.

9. GROUP WENT ON ALL-DAY TOUR OF CARACAS - LOS TEQUES - MARACAY AREA APRIL 19, AND MOST OF GROUP DEPARTS MORNING APRIL 20.

10. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, VISIT WAS MORE SUCCESSJUL THAN MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED.
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
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